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Jesus of Nazareth

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The Beacon Series

A GRADED COURSE OF STUDY FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

JESUS OF NAZARETH

BY

CHARLES EDWARDS PARK



UNITARIAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY

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JESUS OF NAZARETH.

I. Birth.

LUKE II. 1-20.

A long time ago there was a carpenter who lived in a little town called Nazareth. His tools were simple and few, and the wood he had to work with was poor, so that he could not do the fine work carpenters do nowadays. His name was Joseph, and he was quite poor. But he married a girl named Mary, and lived humbly and contentedly in his little house in Nazareth. Mary would do the simple housework and would spin flax or grind barley, while Joseph worked busily with his tools, and so they got along quite nicely.

One day Mary was made very happy by God whispering in her heart that she should very soon have a little child. That was good news to Mary, and, as she thought about it, she determined that she would name her baby "Jesus."

Now, some time after Mary had learned this good news, Joseph came home one day and said they should have to go to Bethlehem, another town, on some matter of business. So he saddled his patient little donkey, and put Mary on its back, and took his staff, and set out for Bethlehem. But when they reached Bethlehem, he found that there was no room for them in any house or at the inn. So he went into a little stable of the inn, where the cattle lived, and he and Mary lay down in the sweet hay to sleep. That very night, as they lay sleeping on the hay in the stable, the little baby was born.

The good news had at last come true, and Mary was very happy indeed. She laid her little baby-boy in a manger, a trough out of which the animals ate their hay and grain, which made a very cosy crib for him.

Meanwhile a company of shepherds, who were watching over their sheep in the pasture outside of the town, were greatly startled to hear a wonderful voice which seemed to come to them out of the sky, and which told them that Jesus was to

be born that very night. They determined to go at once and see this baby. So they found the stable, and were the first persons to give their welcome to the little child Jesus.

1. In what country were the towns of Nazareth and Bethlehem?
2. What name does that country bear to-day?
3. In what province was Nazareth? In what province was Bethlehem?
4. What famous city was very near Bethlehem?
5. Who was Cæsar Augustus?
6. Why was Joseph obliged to go to Bethlehem?
7. Why did they take up their quarters in a stable?
8. How many years ago was Jesus born?
9. What do we call his birthday?
10. Aside from his parents, who were the first persons to see Jesus after his birth?
11. How did these men know about his birth?
12. How did people travel in those days?

II. Bad News.

MATTHEW II. 1-13.

Mary and Joseph had to stay some time in Bethlehem, and the stable was the only place they could find to live in. But pretty soon people in the village began to hear the news, that a little baby had been born there in that stable, and lots of visitors came to see him.

One day among these visitors there came three strange, tall men, who evidently lived in a foreign land. They were very kind indeed to Mary and Jesus, for they gave him some beautiful little golden trinkets, and some incense and myrrh, which is a fragrant ointment something like perfumery. They said they had come from the East, and were going down to Egypt, and they thought they would stop and see this little baby, because they knew he was going to be a great man.

It seems that these three men were magi, or wise men, who lived in a country where people were very fond of studying the stars. They had seen some curious and remarkable constellation in that part of the heavens which had been allotted to the fortunes of the Jewish nation. From seeing this constellation, they had come to the conclusion that there must be some great king or prophet, perhaps even the Messiah, just born in the Jewish country. So they stopped on their way to Egypt to pay their respects to him. It was queer enough to see these tall, dark strangers, with their foreign dress and priceless gifts, bending over a humble manger in a Judean stable. It filled Mary's heart with awe and wonder, and on the whole she was quite relieved when, with a farewell salaam, they mounted their white camels and went their way.

That night poor Joseph had a dream, which came perhaps as a result of this visit. He dreamed that what these wise men had suggested was true, that his little baby-boy was indeed the great Messiah, sent from Heaven to be king over the Jews instead of Herod. In his dream he thought he saw Herod very angry at the birth of this little baby, so angry that he was

determined to kill him. We may be sure that Joseph awoke with a start, and slept but little more that night, and, when morning dawned, he lost no time in telling Mary his evil dream. They were childish, superstitious people, who believed in dreams. It seemed to them that this nightmare was undoubtedly the work of God's warning angel, telling them the bad news so that they could escape in time.

1. What name was given to these three strangers?
2. From what country did they come?
3. To whom did they first apply for guidance?
4. By what shrewd answer did Herod conceal his real feelings?
5. How were they led to the house where Jesus was living?
6. What is frankincense? What is myrrh?
7. Why did they not return to Herod, as he had asked them to do?
8. How was Joseph warned of Herod's jealousy?
9. Whither was he bidden to fly?
10. Why should Herod wish to injure the little baby?
11. How far was Bethlehem from Jerusalem?
12. What sort of a king was Herod?

III. A Hurried Flight.

MATTHEW II. 13-18.

It was plain that something must be done at once. Jerusalem was only two hours' walk from Bethlehem, and Herod's soldiers might arrive at any moment to carry out the threat, and make the bad news which Joseph dreamt come true. Not a moment was to be lost. The first thing to be done was to get out of the country with all speed, for of course Herod could not touch them in any country but his own.

Now, if you will look again at the map, you will see that the shortest way to get out of the country from Bethlehem is to go straight south. But Joseph did not choose that route, because it would take him right into the burning deserts of Arabia, where they would certainly perish of hunger and thirst. The next shortest way out of the country is to travel east, and cross the Jordan River. But Joseph was too wise to choose that route, because he knew that the ravines and river bottoms of the eastern wilderness were full of wild beasts and robbers, among whom his sweet young wife and little boy would be in great peril.

There was only one way left. He must travel westward, along the paths and country lanes, until he struck the great caravan road which skirted the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, running from Egypt to Babylonia. Once on that road, the little fugitive family would be safe, for it was a famous, well-trodden highway. People called it "the Sea Road." There would surely be many kind-hearted travelers and merchants on it who would protect and help them.

Joseph's plan was speedily made, and in a very few minutes the donkey was saddled again, and Mary seated on its back holding her precious child, while Joseph, with his staff, took the bridle and started quietly off. The journey was made by easy stages, and pretty soon they reached the pleasant country of Egypt, where they lived in safety until the jealous old King Herod died.

1. Why did Joseph start by night?
2. How was Herod "mocked by the wise men"?
3. How did this mocking make him feel?
4. What fearful deed did he order his soldiers to commit?
5. What was his purpose in committing such an outrage?
6. How old were his victims?
7. How many victims do you suppose there must have been?
8. How long do you think it took Joseph and Mary to reach Egypt?
9. What animal did people in those days use for desert travel, and why?
10. What kind of wild animals lived in those regions?
11. Why was the great highway which Joseph followed called "the Sea Road"?
12. Do you know any of the stories that are told of the incidents that befell them upon this journey?

IV. Growing Up.

MATTHEW II. 19-23; LUKE II. 40.

It is hard to say just how long Joseph kept his family down in the land of Egypt or just what they did while they were there. The old legends tell us a few things about their visit, —how they camped out under palm-trees, how the good fairies came and took care of them, and how the birds used to flutter about the little baby and delight him with their bright plumage and graceful motions.

But pretty soon Joseph had another dream. This time it was a good one. He dreamt that King Herod was dead, and that now there was no one in the whole country who would wish to hurt his little boy.

So Joseph, believing his dream was true, saddled his donkey again, and again the little family started joyously forth along the level Sea Road, to go back to their own land and their simple home in Nazareth. In due time they arrived safe and sound, and were cordially welcomed by their friends.

At this time Jesus might have been two or three years old, and, as he had never seen his own home, it was all very interesting and exciting for him. So he quickly grew up in that quiet little Galilean village, just as lots of other children around him were growing up. Nor was Jesus the only child in the family. For his father Joseph had been married before, and had four sons and at least two daughters, all of whom were older than Jesus. We know the names of Jesus' brothers. They were Joseph, called after his father, and James and Simon and Judas. We do not know the girls' names.

Jesus and his brothers made friends among the little village children, and played games with them in the sunny street. Their amusements were not unlike our own. They liked to play with wet clay, making mud pies or birds and animals. They liked to play wedding, when they would all form in a procession and go dancing and singing down the street, just as people did in real weddings.

When Jesus got a little older, he went to school in the synagogue, where he sat on the floor with his back to the teacher, and studied his lessons out loud. It made the school-room a very noisy place, but still the scholars had to be good and study hard, for they had a very strict teacher. After school he used to come home and help his father in the carpenter's shop. In this quiet and busy manner Jesus gradually became a strong, intelligent boy.

1. Who succeeded Herod as king of Judea?
2. Where did Joseph take his little family to live on his return?
3. How many brothers and sisters did Jesus have?
4. What were the brothers' names?
5. What makes us suppose that they played wedding and funeral?
6. How did they play wedding? How did they play funeral?
7. Where did they go to school?
8. What did they learn in school?
9. In what kind of a house did they live?
10. What kind of clothes did they wear?
11. What did they have to eat?
12. Why did Jesus expect to become a carpenter?

V. The Great Passover Feast.

LUKE II. 41-52.

Jesus was not at all tied down to a monotonous routine of school and work. It is true his father was a poor man who needed all the help he could get; and his family, like all humble Jewish families, had but two meals a day. It is true the teacher in the synagogue school was strict, and made the scholars work hard. But there were ample chances for frolic, and there were frequent holidays.

The Sabbath, for instance, was observed very strictly as a day of rest and joy. It was a day on which no work of any kind could be done, but it was not a day of stiff and irksome indolence. It was a day for going to church and for relaxation and change. In addition to the weekly Sabbath there were three great annual feasts, and many lesser ones, which required from two to eight days to celebrate.

Chief among the feasts was the great Passover, which came early in spring, and which all who possibly could were expected to attend. It was held in Jerusalem, and it lasted eight days. Jesus had never been to a Passover, but when he was twelve years old, and could understand a good deal of what he saw and heard, his father consented to take him. So, when the time came, they joined a little company of friends, and went to Jerusalem.

We can well imagine that Jesus had a splendid time. The sights were all so new and wonderful. The massive walls and glistening roofs of the great city filled him with delight. He wandered around through the city and all through the beautiful temple, and, when it came time to go home, he forgot all about the three days' journey and the friends who would miss him. His parents looked for him the first night out, but he was nowhere to be found. They went back and searched the city, but in vain. Then Mary remembered how interested he had been in the temple, and she and Joseph went there to look.

Sure enough, in a secluded corner, seated in the center of a group of grave, learned Rabbis, was Jesus. He was asking them questions, and they were wondering at his intelligence. His face was radiant with interest and excitement. When his mother reproached him, and told him how they had searched everywhere for him, he replied quietly, Why did you hunt so for me? Did you not know that I should be in but one place, here in God's temple? So they found him, and started back again, and soon overtook their friends. But from that time Mary and Joseph realized that their son would be a thoughtful, serious-minded man, to whom the deeper problems of life and law were of first importance.

1. How much of a journey was it from Nazareth to Jerusalem?
2. How did people make this journey?
3. Where did they stay in Jerusalem?
4. What great building in Jerusalem was the center of common interest?
5. How far had Joseph and Mary gone on their return before they missed Jesus?
6. How long did they hunt for him in the city?
7. Where did they finally find him?
8. What was he doing?
9. With what words did Mary rebuke him for giving them such a fright?
10. How did he reply?
11. In verse 49, to whom does he refer by the word "Father"?
12. What event in Jewish history does the Passover commemorate?

VI. The Fearless Preacher.

MATTHEW III. 1-12; MARK I. 1-8; LUKE III. 1-20.

From the age of twelve until he became a full-grown young man we know nothing at all about Jesus. These were years of great excitement in Judea. The people were sure that God would send them a messenger to conquer their enemies and to organize them into the greatest nation on earth. Every one was trembling with eagerness at thought of the Messiah who was about to come.

One day, some ten or fifteen years after Jesus got lost in Jerusalem, there came to Galilee a rumor which caused great excitement and set everybody talking. The rumor said that a wild-looking man had suddenly appeared near Jerusalem from the southern wilderness, and had begun to preach and promise that the Messiah, the great king whom God should send, would very shortly come.

This wild-looking preacher was named John. Very few people knew where he came from or what family he belonged to. He was about thirty years old, and all he wore was a mantle, or tunic, of camel's-hair cloth, such as the desert wanderers in the south made. He had also a belt of coarse leather around his waist, and his face was pinched and brown. What with his bright eyes and long, streaming hair, he made a very strange, impressive figure. People said he had lived in the wilderness all his life, eating only the honey of wild bees and the locusts, or grasshoppers, which he could catch in abundance, and which make very good eating, if they are fried in butter.

But the most remarkable thing about this man was the way he preached. Such fervent, earnest oratory had not been heard since the days of the prophets, and people swarmed out from all the region to hear him. Throngs went every day from Jerusalem, and curious or interested listeners came from the towns to the north, and some even from Galilee.

When Jesus heard these rumors of John and of his won-

derful preaching, he determined to go and hear him. He had been thinking quietly, all his life, about the Messiah whom God was expected to send, and he had his own ideas of what his office and work should be. He thought he should like very much to hear what this fearless hermit had to say about him. So Jesus joined a small party of young enthusiasts who all wanted to see this strange man, and, leaving the home and the carpenter-shop, started off for Jerusalem with his friends. He little thought how momentous a step he was taking, and how changed a man he would be when next he saw that humble home and that busy little shop again.

1. What was the preacher's name?
2. Why is it right to call him a fearless preacher?
3. Where had he been living before he began to preach?
4. How was he clothed and what did he eat?
5. What did he urge people to do, if they wished to belong to the Messiah's kingdom?
6. Where did he baptize them?
7. What nation did the Jews regard as their greatest enemy?
8. Why did the Jews believe that their Messiah would come just at that time?
9. What do the words "Christ" and "Messiah" mean?
10. How did the Jews expect to recognize their Messiah when he came?
11. How did John reply when the people asked him if he was the Messiah?
12. Was there any relationship between John and Jesus?

VII. Finding his Work.

MATTHEW III. 13-17; MARK I. 9-11; LUKE III. 21-22.

A small company of young men could travel sixty-five or seventy miles very quickly. It was not long before Jesus and his companions reached the vicinity of Jerusalem. They began to meet other little companies, all headed in one direction. Guided by these, they soon reached the quiet little spot on the Jordan River where John was living, and where he preached every day. They found quite a throng there, seated on the grass or standing around in easy attitudes, and all listening intently to a tall, gaunt figure, who was pouring out a perfect torrent of stirring words.

It was not long before Jesus was intensely interested. The preacher was telling about the Messiah, how he would shortly come, and what kind of a ruler he would be. He said that this Messiah would come very soon to organize a great kingdom, the greatest in the world, and that, while none but Jews would belong to that kingdom, yet not even all Jews would be admitted, but only those who repented of their sins and determined to live better lives. He warned them that, if they wanted to belong to this kingdom, they must prepare themselves by discarding their sinful ways and changing their manner of life.

Then he said he was the forerunner of the Messiah, sent to prepare the nation for his coming, and he invited all who agreed with him, and who would promise to follow his advice and prepare themselves in the truer way, to be baptized in the Jordan River.

Now Jesus had listened with beating heart and flaming eyes. This man had said just what he had secretly believed all along. He agreed with him perfectly. Moreover, it seemed to him his plain duty to adopt John's work and become a prophet of the Messiah. It was the best service he could render. The carpenter-shop seemed far away and unimportant compared to this urgent duty which John's preaching

had revealed to him. It came over him like a flash. Here was the work God meant him to do! He had found it at last. It was a critical moment in his life, but he made the resolution bravely and completely. He would be a preacher and a reformer as John was. He would spend his time and strength in the great task of preparing his countrymen for the coming of their King, so that, when the time came, they should be ready to welcome him.

With this determination he entered the river and was baptized by John. When he came out of the water, he was a changed man, for he had found his work.

-
1. Did John want to baptize Jesus?
 2. Why did he hesitate?
 3. What did it mean that a man was baptized by John?
 4. How was the baptism done, do you suppose?
 5. Where was it done?
 6. What wonderful thing happened as Jesus came out of the water?
 7. Why should we think that Jesus had no particular interest in his carpenter work?
 8. Why did he go into the carpenter's trade?
 9. How old do you suppose Jesus was at the time he changed his work?
 10. Did Jesus wait until John was arrested before he began to preach?
 11. Where did he go to do his preaching, and why?
 12. In what way does his preaching resemble John's?

VIII. A New Home.

MATTHEW IV. 12-16; LUKE IV. 14-30.

Very shortly after Jesus had been baptized in the River Jordan, a serious disaster befell the man to whose preaching he had listened and at whose hands he had received his baptism.

John was one of those fearless men who will speak the plain truth to everybody without thinking of consequences. He did not know what it meant to be politic or cautious. He had found occasion in one or two of his sermons to condemn very bitterly the private life of one of the prominent men in the country, Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great. This Herod Antipas had done some wicked things, which John promptly denounced in his fearless and fiery way. As a result, Herod's officers came one day and arrested John, and put him in prison, so that his career as a preacher was cut suddenly short. When Jesus heard this news, he felt that his own actions must be determined by John's fortune. Now that John was shut up in prison, Jesus saw that it was more than ever his duty to take John's place and preach about the Messiah, but he also saw that, if he began to preach in that neighborhood, around Jerusalem, he might expect much the same fate. He considered his mission too important to be exposed to any such peril, so he decided to go back to Galilee, to his own home, and begin his preaching there.

But, when he got there, he found still another difficulty waiting for him. The people of Nazareth had known him ever since his childhood. He had grown up among them. It would be embarrassing, to say the least, to go back to that old home, where he had always been known as a quiet, humble carpenter, and set himself up as a preacher and a prophet. People would pay no heed to him. They would be too familiar with him and his family to give him the respectful attention he should demand. So he decided to go to the near-by town of Capernaum, where he was a stranger, and start his new life in that new home.

Some time later a little thing happened which showed the wisdom of this change. After he had been in Capernaum a while, he made a visit to Nazareth one Sabbath day, and, entering the synagogue, he rose to speak to the people. At first they were astonished. They said to each other, Why, is not this Joseph's son, Jesus the carpenter? Do not his mother and his brothers all live among us? But later on, when Jesus said something they did not like, they got so angry with him that they seized him, and would have done him hurt, but that he managed to escape from them. After that he returned to his new home in Capernaum, and had nothing more to do with Nazareth.

1. What do you understand to be the "power of the Spirit"?
2. What day of the week did the Jews observe as the Sabbath?
3. How came it that Jesus was allowed to stand up in the synagogue to teach?
4. What kind of a book was handed to him?
5. From what Old Testament prophet did he select his text?
6. How did the people receive his preaching?
7. What violent attempt did they make upon his life?
8. Where did he go to live after this?
9. What is the sea, mentioned in Matthew iv. 13?
10. What were its names, and how big was it?
11. What was the principal industry of Nazareth? of Capernaum?
12. What famous proverb is taken from this lesson?

IX. Making Friends.

MATTHEW IV. 18-22; MARK I. 16-20; LUKE V. 1-11.

Although Capernaum was near Nazareth, it was a different kind of a place. It was a busy, thriving little village, built on a beautiful plain running along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Unlike Nazareth, where the principal occupation was farming and sheep-raising, Capernaum's chief industry was fishing. The shore of the lake near the town was lined with funny little fishing-boats, with tall, graceful lateen sails, and with long fish-nets spread out on the decks to dry in the sun. The little fresh-water fish were caught, sometimes in vast quantities, and were cured either by drying or by pickling in brine, and, thus prepared, formed an important article of food for the poorer people of Galilee.

Jesus was greatly attracted by these curious fishing-boats and by the sturdy men who worked in them. He would often go down to the shore and watch the little craft swinging at anchor, or get to talking with the fishermen themselves as they sat in their boats and mended their nets. In this way he made a number of friends.

He liked especially one old man named Zebedee, who had two young sons about Jesus' own age, James and John. He used to sit for hours talking with these three, telling them about the kingdom and the Messiah, while they would get so interested in his talk that they would forget their broken nets, and would listen, open-eyed, to his earnest words.

Then there were two other men of whom he was very fond. They were Simon and Andrew, two brothers, who owned a boat together, and carried on an active industry. They were somewhat older than he was, but they grew to love him and respect him very highly. These four men, Simon and Andrew and the two sons of Zebedee, soon became the dearest friends Jesus had in Capernaum, so that finally they all decided to give up their fishing, and simply become companions of his, following him everywhere and learning to preach as he preached.

In this way there was started a little company of warm friends, who gathered around Jesus, and who made themselves partners in his work and in his hopes. There were in all twelve in the company. Most of them were fishermen, but some were farmers and shepherds, and one was a tax-collector. But, whatever their work was, they all came to have such a warm liking for Jesus and such an enthusiasm for the work he was doing that they gave up their lives to the pleasant task of following him and helping him. They called themselves his "disciples", which means his "pupils".

1. What was Simon's other name, and what does it mean?
2. What were Simon and Andrew doing when Jesus saw them?
3. What occupation did Jesus promise to teach them?
4. Where were James and John when Jesus saw them?
5. According to the story in Luke, why did Jesus step into one of the boats?
6. What remarkable thing happened when he asked Simon to let down his nets?
7. What did Simon do and say when he saw this wonder?
8. What business relation existed between James and John and Simon and Andrew?
9. How many disciples were there in all, and what were their names?
10. What is a disciple?
11. Do you know what the occupations of some of the other disciples were?
12. In what way did they help Jesus, and why did he feel the need of their help?

X. A Wonderful Discovery.

MARK I. 21-28; LUKE IV. 31-37.

Of course, this company of young men who went around always together, and who always preached or talked about the kingdom of God, attracted a good deal of attention in Capernaum. People in those days were even more deeply interested in the kingdom of God than we are to-day in the great political or social questions of our time.

Jesus had no difficulty whatever in interesting people about his work, especially as he talked about it so earnestly. A great many people heard him preach, not only in Capernaum, but from towns roundabout. They began to know him by sight and by reputation. They began to look upon him as something of a man, because he talked so convincingly, and so clearly.

Now one Sabbath day Jesus went into the synagogue with his friends, and began to talk to the people. At once the room was still. Everybody wanted to hear what this famous man would say. They sat silently on the floor, and drank in his words. Suddenly right in the midst of the stillness there came a startling interruption. It came from a poor man over in the back corner, who was not perfectly well. He was subject to occasional spasms, or fits. Whenever such a fit seized him, he would throw back his head, and roll his eyes, and clench his hands, and shriek aloud, no matter where he was. Quite a number of people in that country had this ailment. They used to say it was because a devil, or a bad spirit, lived in them, and made them do these strange things. This poor fellow had a fit right in the middle of Jesus' talk. It was a startling interruption. Everybody turned to see what the matter was.

Jesus also turned, and saw the sick man shaking his head from side to side and rolling his eyes. So he pointed directly at him with his finger, and said very firmly, Hold thy peace! And then a wonderful thing happened. Instantly the fit left the poor victim. He raised his head and looked quietly at

Jesus, as much as to say, Yes, Master. He was cured of his illness. Every one in the synagogue was astounded. How did Jesus cure the man? Where did he get the power to make him well?

We cannot help feeling that Jesus himself was amazed at finding that he had such an influence over sick people. He was looked upon by the superstitious Galileans with even greater awe. People talked about his power, and brought their friends to be healed. It was a great discovery, and added greatly to his opportunity. And Jesus, in a very noble way, accepted this new power as a solemn trust, and used it faithfully in curing and quieting the sufferers he constantly saw about him.

1. Where was Jesus teaching one Sabbath day?
2. What strange interruption stopped him in the middle of his talk?
3. What was the trouble with this man?
4. Was this a common ailment in that country?
5. What words did the man utter?
6. How did Jesus answer the sufferer?
7. How did this affect the man with the unclean spirit?
8. What does it mean by saying that "the unclean spirit came out of him"?
9. What did the people think when they saw this incident?
10. Was this power of casting out demons peculiar to Jesus, or did others possess it?
11. How did this power increase his influence?
12. Was Jesus himself glad to find that he had this power?

XI. An Open-Air Church.

MATTHEW V.-VII.; LUKE VI. 20-49.

The discovery of this power was a great help to Jesus, because it enabled him to do so much practical good to the unfortunates who came to hear him. Before long every one in Capernaum was talking about the quiet, grave-eyed man who could cure some forms of sickness simply by the strength and calmness of his personal influence. People came eagerly, in great numbers, to see him, and hear him preach about the Messiah who was coming to establish the kingdom of God.

Jesus himself believed the Messiah might come almost any minute, and most devout Jews shared this expectation. Therefore, Jesus was all the more anxious to get people ready for him. To do this, they must be induced to repent of their old sins and live more cleanly and nobly, for it was only clean and noble men and women whom the Messiah would take into his kingdom. So Jesus preached constantly, urging every one to better living; and the people came in such crowds to hear him that no one house could hold them all.

It was for this reason that one fine morning, when hundreds of people had assembled to listen, Jesus led the whole company out to a nearby hillside, where they all sat down around him on the soft grass, and had an outdoor church. Jesus sat in the center, and preached them a long, beautiful sermon. We may read the entire sermon in the Gospel of Matthew. It is called "The Sermon on the Mount," because Jesus preached it outdoors on this hillside. It told people how they must act and live to become worthy of the kingdom of God.

One striking thing about the sermon is that it is still true. It was preached nearly two thousand years ago, and the kingdom of God has not quite come yet, but the instructions in that sermon for entering that kingdom are just as true and just as important for us to-day as they were for the Galilean people to whom they were uttered almost two thousand years

ago. The three chapters in Matthew rank among the most beautiful and most famous passages of the world's literature. There are portions which every one should know by heart, as, for instance, the first twelve verses of chapter v., and in chapter vi., verses 5 to 15.

We may see in this sermon how fond Jesus was of nature, how observant he was of birds and flowers and grasses and rain-storms. In all these things he seemed to see the workings of God's just and loving spirit, and was glad and proud to feel himself a son of that great God who worked and breathed in the life and beauty around him.

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1. What name is given to the passage in Matthew v. 1-12?
 2. What is the appropriateness of this name?
 3. What is a jot and a tittle?
 4. What does "Raca" mean?
 5. Can you find the Old Testament commandments which Jesus quotes in verses 21, 33, 38, and 43 of chapter v.?
 6. How does he improve upon these old commandments?
 7. Reading Matthew vi. 2, do you suppose that the hypocrites really "sounded a trumpet" when they gave alms?
 8. What do we call this way of talking?
 9. What name is given to the passage in Matthew vi. 9-13?
 10. Who was Solomon?
 11. Can you describe a "lily of the field"?
 12. What is a mote? and what is a beam?

XII. A Trip across the Lake.

MATTHEW VIII. 23-34; MARK IV. 35-V. 20; LUKE VIII. 22-39.

Jesus did not stay always in Capernaum. He made frequent trips to the towns in the neighborhood. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Magdala, Tiberias, Emmaus, Cana, Nain, Scythopolis,—all these places he visited. He thought it his duty to preach to as many people as possible.

One day he determined to cross the Sea of Galilee, and visit one or two towns on the other side. It was a short journey. He and the disciples embarked in a fishing-boat, and sailed merrily along. Jesus leaned back upon the stern seat, and soon fell asleep. All at once, when they were about half-way across the lake, a furious squall struck them. It was so violent, and the waves ran so high, that everybody got frightened. They ran to Jesus and woke him up, and said, Master, help us, or we will all drown. Jesus very calmly asked them, Why are you afraid? And, sure enough, in a very few minutes the squall stopped,—the disciples firmly believed that Jesus made it stop; and they went sailing on their way.

As soon as they landed on the other side, the first person they saw was another of those poor men who were half crazed by epilepsy. He was prowling around in a rude little graveyard, and, as soon as he spied Jesus and his friends, he came rushing out to meet them, almost like a wild animal. But Jesus, you remember, possessed a wonderful influence over such unfortunate creatures, and it was not long before this savage man began to feel this influence from his strong and quieting personality, so that he acted and looked just like an ordinary person.

But, as they all walked along, a swineherd met them, who was so astonished to see this poor outcast walking soberly along with a company of strange men that he rushed off to the village and spread the report that a wonderful magician was coming, who had already cured the lunatic and had made his herd of swine crazy instead. This report frightened the

villagers. They did not know what this magician might do to them. So they came out to meet Jesus, and begged him to go away. Jesus saw that he could not preach to them, that in their fright they would neither listen nor believe, so he and his friends turned back and launched the boat again, and returned to Capernaum without mishap.

1. Into whose boat might Jesus have entered in order to cross the lake?
2. What happened as soon as they got fairly started?
3. What did the disciples do in their terror?
4. What country lay upon the other side?
5. Who were the first persons that they saw?
6. What were their names?
7. What happened after Jesus had cured them?
8. What request did the citizens make of Jesus?
9. Why did they wish him to go away?
10. What did the man who had been cured ask to do?
11. Why did not Jesus grant this request?
12. Why could he not preach in that country?

XIII. Days of Happiness.

MATTHEW IV. 23-25; MARK I. 35-39.

The time passed very rapidly with Jesus during this period of his life. He was surrounded by friends who not only loved him, but looked up to him, calling him their leader and their master. He was eagerly welcomed everywhere he went, and his words were received with quiet, grateful respect. People visited him constantly either to ask questions or to be helped in some illness or malady by his wonderful power.

Most of all, Jesus himself took an intense pleasure in his work. He was doing the thing he was best fitted to do. He felt that he was working at just the task God wanted him to adopt. He threw himself heart and soul into his duties, with a joyousness and an earnestness that made it seem not at all like work.

This, of course, was the principal secret of his happiness.

To be sure, there were times when he got very much discouraged. No one seemed to understand him sometimes, not even his disciples, who were his nearest and dearest friends. People were apt to judge him by themselves and to think him just as self-seeking and greedy in all he did or tried as they themselves were. They seemed to be unable to understand that he was working from the noblest and most unselfish of motives; and, whenever Jesus saw this, it made him very unhappy. But, when these times of discouragement came, he found a safe and certain remedy in his constant feeling of companionship with God.

Jesus knew perfectly well that, however grossly his fellow-men might misjudge him, his Heavenly Father knew him as he really was, and loved him and blessed him as he really deserved. So, when the discouragement came, he would slip away from the multitudes who tired him with their dreary, stupid questions, and go out to some lonely hillside, away from everybody, and there he would spend a quiet hour alone, praying to God.

When he came back, he would be prepared to take up the work again, being strengthened with an inner serenity which the affairs of the world could not destroy. Such trying times, however, were infrequent. The long golden days glided rapidly by, filled full of work and hope. It was the happiest time in all his life, being made so by his own devotion and fidelity.

1. In what province did Jesus do most of his work?
2. What are the natural boundaries of Galilee?
3. How large a region is it?
4. Where is the country of Syria?
5. What kinds of sufferers were brought to him?
6. Where was Decapolis?
7. What are the names given to the region beyond Jordan?
8. Where did he go a great while before day?
9. How do we know that he was sometimes misunderstood?
10. What was his great source of strength?
11. Was he welcomed and heard in every town that he visited?
12. What was the real basis of his happiness?

XIV. Becoming Famous.

MARK I. 32-34, II. 1-12; LUKE IV. 42-44.

They had no telegraph or telephone or morning paper in those days, not even a post-office department. When a man in Babylon wanted to send a letter to his brother in Jerusalem, he wrote it on a piece of papyrus or parchment, and then waited until some caravan of merchants should start from Babylon to go west. Then he would give it to some friend in the caravan, asking him to forward it to Jerusalem. This friend would take it as near to Jerusalem as he was going, and then give it to some one who, he knew, was going still nearer. In this way, after weeks and weeks of travel, passing through half a dozen hands perhaps, the letter would finally reach its destination. Of course, all news had to travel in the same deliberate fashion.

So, you see, it took some little time for the news of Jesus and his wonderful preaching, and still more wonderful powers, to reach the more distant parts of the country. However, Capernaum was a favored town, because it was right near a great caravan trail, and could receive news and send news much more quickly than many other little villages. So this is how Jesus gradually grew to be famous.

A caravan would halt at Nazareth, right near by, for the night, having come down from Damascus. Some one in the caravan would strike up an acquaintance with the citizen who sold him wine or flour for his supper, and would ask the news. The citizen would say, Well, there is a man in Capernaum who is preaching astonishing things about the Messiah and the kingdom of God, and he has a wonderful power over sick people, so that he can cure them. And some say that he even stopped a squall one day on the Lake of Gennesaret. The merchant, of course, would want to know all the details.

The next night perhaps the caravan would halt in Cæsarea, and the night after that in Joppa, and the night after that in Azotus, and in each place the merchant would tell all the story

he had heard in Nazareth about the remarkable man in Capernaum, and each time the story would be a little bigger.

And then perhaps another caravan would come into Nazareth, bound from Egypt to Antioch, and would hear the same story, and would proceed to scatter it along the road to the north, just as the first caravan had scattered it along to the south. In these ways, after three or four months, Jesus became quite a famous man. People came even from Tyre and Sidon to see him. They were all kinds of people,—Romans, Greeks, Canaanites, and Syrians; but he treated them all alike, and did his best to cure their ailments and to persuade and encourage them to a better and purer way of living.

1. Where is Babylon?
2. What is a caravan?
3. Can you find on the map the great caravan trail that ran through the country?
4. Where are Cæsarea, Joppa, and Azotus?
5. Where is Antioch?
6. Where are Tyre and Sidon?
7. Who were the Canaanites?
8. How did people send letters in those days?
9. What was the principal reason for Christ's becoming famous?
10. How was he interrupted one day as he was preaching in a house in Capernaum?
11. How did the sick man enter the house?
12. What were the first words that Christ spoke to him?

XV. Hints and Suspicions.

MATTHEW VIII. 1-4, IX. 30-31, XII. 15-16; MARK III. 7-12, V. 43, VII. 36, VIII. 26.

Jesus began to find that this reputation which he was gaining among the people of Galilee had its embarrassing side. Not only was he deprived of the freedom and the privacy which he formerly enjoyed, but he was also placed in a somewhat false position by the respect and the adulation he received.

You remember that Jesus, when he began his work of preaching, had no other idea than to warn people that the Messiah would come very soon, and to tell them how to get ready for him. The thought had never as yet entered his mind that he himself might be the Messiah. He considered himself simply a forerunner of his, like John. But the time was approaching for the dawning of the truth. When John first began to preach, he showed such power and earnestness that the people who heard him began to wonder if he might not actually be the Messiah. They came and asked him "whether haply he were the Christ"; and John always answered most decidedly that he was not.

Now the same thing began to happen to Jesus. When the people heard him preach and witnessed his cures, they at once jumped to the conclusion, in their eagerness, that this remarkable man must be the Messiah. Just hear how he talks! they said. See how the people flock to him! See what he can do for sick people simply by laying his hands on them! Surely, this man is the Messiah!

It shows how eager everybody was to have their Christ come. They were constantly on the watch, and anybody who seemed to possess extraordinary power was at once suspected. When these hints and suspicions were dropped into Jesus' ears, as they undoubtedly were sooner or later, he did not openly deny them, because he himself was not perfectly sure. These very hints and suspicions of the people were perhaps

what first caused him to ask seriously: Am I the Messiah? Am I the Christ whom the whole nation is expecting? So while he could not exactly deny the hints of his friends, still he resolved to give them as little cause as possible for suspecting such things about him.

He did not want to be pressed by their importuning, or carried away by their eagerness. He must have lots of time to think it over by himself. So thereafter, whenever he cured anybody, he made him promise to tell not a soul. After healing the two blind men, he said, See that no man know it; and again, after curing a large number, he charged them that they should not make him known. Jesus did not want to be talked about. He felt the need of time and privacy to think out the great problem which his friends' ready suspicions had hinted to him.

1. What great leader were the people expecting at that time?
2. How did they believe he would come?
3. How had John the Baptist excited their suspicion?
4. What did they begin to think when they saw Jesus performing his marvelous works?
5. Among whom did these suspicions first arise?
6. How did Jesus receive these suspicions?
7. What was leprosy?
8. Why did Jesus charge those whom he cured to tell no man?
9. Why did the Pharisees want to destroy him?
10. Did these people keep their promise to him?
11. What kind of a Messiah did the Pharisees want?
12. How would the Pharisees treat him if he should claim to be the Messiah?

XVI. A Secret Problem.

MATTHEW XIV. 22-23; LUKE V. 12-16, X. 21-24.

This hint which had been dropped into Jesus' mind by his eager followers, that perhaps he himself was the Messiah, was destined to play a tremendous part in his life. He could not altogether put the thought away from him. There may have been moments when he said to himself: No, it cannot be possible that I am the one whom God has chosen. Am I strong and good enough to do so great a work?

But there were other moments when the hint came to him with growing persistence. It gradually grew from being a mere fancy, a suggestion of others, into a really serious possibility. Might he not, after all, be the very man whom God had selected to be His Messiah? He had to confess that in some ways he was well fitted for the task. He saw what the people needed, a better and purer religion, and he knew that he could give them that. He saw that he had a great power over them, that they would follow him and obey him, and he was sure he could lead them into truer ways of life.

When he allowed himself to think thus, he was almost convinced that the suspicions of his friends must be correct, and that he really must be God's Messiah. And, then, back would come the doubts and misgivings. Most of all, he had to tremble at what he knew might very likely be his fate, if once he allowed himself to be called the Messiah. He knew that the powerful men of the nation expected a Messiah who would come with pomp and glory. They would not believe in any Messiah whose only claim to the office lay in being spiritually-minded, and who in outward showing was humble and lowly, as he would be. They would call such a man an impostor, and would first ridicule him, and then they would get angry, and very likely kill him for blasphemy.

Jesus saw that this might be his fate if he declared himself the Messiah, so he faced this hard problem, and spent all his thought and prayer in trying to decide it. He would not

discuss it openly. He would not allow his disciples even to mention the matter. It was a secret problem, which he alone must decide. The happiness and the brightness of his former days gave place now to a sober and thoughtful air, for Jesus was laboring with the gravest question of his life.

This is what he kept asking himself: "Does God intend me to be only a humble preacher, sent to prepare the way for the Messiah, or is it His intention that I myself shall be that very Messiah who must lead the nation to a truer worship and a purer life?" It did not make the problem any easier to know that in all probability his life depended upon the answer.

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1. What secret problem was Jesus harboring in his mind at this time?
 2. Do you think it was an easy problem to decide?
 3. How would his own fate depend upon his decision?
 4. How would the fate of his disciples depend upon his decision?
 5. Did he allow anybody to influence him in deciding this problem?
 6. Was it easy for him to be alone?
 7. How did he secure for himself occasional moments of solitude?
 8. How did he use these moments?
 9. Who was his only counsellor during this period of doubt?
 10. Did the disciples understand all that was passing through their Master's mind?
 11. How long did this period of indecision last?
 12. In what ways did he find himself fitted to be the Messiah?

XVII. Messengers from John.

MATTHEW XI. 2-19; LUKE VII. 18-23.

One day, right in the midst of this torturing uncertainty, there came to Jesus several messengers from his friend John. Since Jesus began his work, John had been in prison; but before that he had been preaching in Southern Palestine, just as Jesus was now preaching in Galilee. He had been arrested by Herod and cast into prison because in one of his sermons he had denounced Herod for marrying his own brother's wife.

While he lay in prison he heard the news that this man, Jesus, whom he had baptized months before in the Jordan River, was attracting great attention in Galilee by his remarkable preaching and was performing wonderful cures among the sick, and in general was creating a great deal of excitement.

At once John began to think just what Jesus' friends were beginning to think, that this man might perhaps be the Messiah. So, being very eager to know, he sent some of his disciples as messengers to Jesus, to ask him frankly, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? Or, in other words, Are you the Messiah whom we are expecting, or must we still wait?

Now in the answer which Jesus gave to these messengers we can see something of the doubt which was troubling him. He did not answer either Yes or No, because he had not yet decided. But he told the messengers to go back and give John the facts,—how the blind receive their sight and how the lame are made to walk, and how the lepers are cleansed and how the common people have good tidings preached to them, all by means of his strange power. Tell John these things, we seem to hear Jesus say, and let him decide for himself whether I, who do these things, am the Messiah or not.

So the messengers returned to their master in prison, and Jesus was left to ponder, still undecided, over his problem. The fact that John himself, his teacher and friend, in whose judgment he placed such confidence, really gave serious thought

to the suspicion that he might be the Messiah, had the effect of strengthening the possibility in Jesus' mind, and in fact may have had great weight in his final decision.

1. Where was John when he heard about Jesus?
2. How had he come to be put in such a place?
3. What question did he tell his disciples to ask Jesus?
4. Whom did he mean by the words "He that cometh"?
5. How did Jesus answer their question?
6. What does this answer indicate?
7. What do you think Jesus meant by Matthew xi. 6?
8. From what Old Testament passage is this answer quoted?
9. To what kind of children does Jesus refer in Matthew xi. 17?
10. How were the people of that generation like these children?
11. How did John's question influence Jesus himself?
12. What did Jesus think of John?

XVIII. Making Enemies.

MATTHEW IX. 10-13 and 32-34, XII. 9-14 and 22-24, XXII. 15-22;
MARK II. 15-17.

Almost everybody has enemies. It is hardly possible to be firm and decided in one's convictions without attracting the hostility of those who disagree with those convictions. So it was with Jesus. We are not to suppose that every one who heard him agreed with him and liked him. There were some who disagreed utterly with him, and who at first opposed or ridiculed all he said and did, and who later grew to hate him and fear him.

These were chiefly the men known as "Scribes" and "Pharisees." They were the better educated men, the strong, prominent class in the nation. They disagreed with Jesus when he said that the coming Messiah would be a reformer instead of a warrior. They believed he would be a great general, who would come in all the glory and splendor of military pomp, and put himself at the head of their armies, and with the help of Jehovah lead them in glorious victory against the forces of the Roman Empire.

Of course, Jesus could not believe any such thing as this. He said that the Messiah would be a lowly prophet, a religious teacher, a king of justice and goodness and love. The Scribes and Pharisees hated him for saying such things. First they mocked him and said he was a servant of the devil. Then they said he was nothing but an ignorant carpenter. Then they pretended to be shocked at his blasphemy and irreverence.

But Jesus continued to be perfectly fearless and honest in his conduct. He did not believe it was God's wish that the Sabbath, for instance, should be observed as the Scribes and Pharisees observed it. He did not think it was wrong to do good deeds on the Sabbath day, even though such deeds did have the appearance of work. But the Scribes and Pharisees said he was breaking the law when he performed his cures on the Sabbath, and hated him all the more. In fact, they took

a malicious pleasure in watching him, and in picking him up in matters where he broke the law, with the hope, doubtless, that some day they might catch him in some serious offense and have him arrested.

Of course, this hatred of theirs towards him was a great obstacle to his work, and, moreover, it aroused in him a corresponding feeling of indignation towards them for their hollow and pretentious righteousness. Several times he called them "hypocrites" and "vipers." But, in spite of it all, Jesus went steadily and fearlessly about his work. They might show him their enmity, but they could not frighten him or turn him from what he considered his duty.

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1. Who were Publicans?
 2. How were they regarded by people?
 3. What kind of people did Jesus attract to himself?
 4. What did the Pharisees say when they saw him eating with these people?
 5. Who were Scribes and Pharisees?
 6. How did Jesus reply to their criticism?
 7. Who did they mean by the son of David?
 8. Who was Beelzebub?
 9. How did the Pharisees try to overthrow him?
 10. What sly trap did they set for him in Matthew xxii. 17?
 11. How did Jesus outwit them?
 12. Can you think of any other great man who made enemies?

XIX. The Fate of John the Baptist.

MATTHEW XIV. 1-12; MARK VI. 14-29.

The last we saw of John he was in prison, where he had been put because he criticised King Herod for marrying his brother's wife. Herod did not intend to kill him, in fact he was rather afraid to. But the wife hated him with her whole heart, and was determined to put a stop to his fearless and troublesome honesty.

One day Herod had a birthday party in his palace, and one of the features of the party was a dance which his step-daughter Salome performed. It was a graceful, beautiful dance, and Herod was so pleased that he rashly promised Salome anything she should ask as a reward. So Salome asked her mother what she should choose, and her mother told her to choose the head of John the Baptist. Of course, Salome did not want such a fearful thing, but her mother was so anxious to have John beheaded that she made her daughter choose that for a reward. Herod accordingly had John beheaded in prison.

Now one day, some time after this, some one told Herod of the strange, wonderful man up in Galilee, who was exciting such comment by his preaching and his cures. Herod's guilty conscience made him at once superstitious, and he said, with a start: This man is no other than John the Baptist, whom I killed. He is risen from the dead. His ghost has come back to haunt me. But Jesus in the mean time had been told, by some loyal friends of John, of the tragic fate that had befallen their master.

It was the kind of news that would very naturally add to his fears and anxieties. He and John were very much alike in thought and deed. They were working for the same purpose. If John was deemed worthy of death, might it not follow that he himself would be the next to be sought out and slain? He was not yet ready to die. He had not settled his problem, and, until he could decide that, he must find peace and safety. So, when Jesus heard the news of John's death,

he quietly entered a boat with his disciples, and retreated to the other side of the lake, where he could be secure from intrusion and disturbance for a while.

1. What did Herod think when he heard about Jesus?
2. Who were the old prophets of Israel?
3. Why had Herod imprisoned John?
4. How did Herod feel towards John?
5. How did Herod celebrate his birthday?
6. What was his step-daughter's name, and how did she please Herod?
7. In his gratitude, what foolish promise did Herod make?
8. What did his daughter choose for her reward?
9. Who told her to choose this?
10. How did Herod feel about granting this request?
11. Who performed the burial rites for John the Baptist?
12. Where did the tragedy occur?

XX. A Fugitive.

MATTHEW XIV. 13 and 22, XV. 21-28; LUKE XIII. 31-33.

Jesus did not run away because he was afraid. His bravery in after-days proves to us that he was not afraid of death in itself. But he was not yet ready to die. He had not yet decided his problem one way or the other. He must have more time. So, in order to get this time and escape the fear and superstitious curiosity of Herod, which might lead to his arrest, Jesus felt it would be only wise to retire for a short time from public view, and go away to some distant region, where he might be unmolested until things blew over a little.

So he and his disciples planned a long walking tour to the north. First, they got into a little boat (it may have been Peter's fishing-boat), and rowed across the lake to a town called Bethsaida. As soon as they landed, people recognized Jesus, for, you remember, he had been across the lake before. They at once crowded around him to hear what he would say, and they brought him all their sick friends and neighbors, that he might heal them. He stayed in that region some days, visiting the various little towns and villages around there and doing all the good he could; and then he started on to other places.

By easy stages he soon reached the region around the great cities of Tyre and Sidon, some forty miles to the north. Here he was out of Jewish soil, in a foreign land. The people about him were not especially interested in him, because they were not Jews, but Canaanites and Greeks and Phœnicians. He cured the little daughter of a Canaanitish woman, but for the most part people paid no attention to him.

His message of the coming Messiah and his kingdom of righteousness did not appeal to their foreign minds. Jesus felt that he must use his time to better advantage, so after a little while he turned south again, and came to Bethsaida, where he cured a blind man, and then, making a great circle, he struck north a second time, to visit some villages at

Cæsarea Philippi. It was at Cæsarea Philippi that something happened which changed the whole course of his life.

1. In what danger did Jesus find himself after John's death?
2. Who warned him of this danger?
3. In his answer what term of contempt did he apply to Herod?
4. Into what region did he retire?
5. What favor did the Canaanitish woman ask of him?
6. What did he mean by his first answer?
7. What did he mean by his second answer?
8. How did the woman finally induce him to help her?
9. What kind of people lived in Tyre and Sidon?
10. Did Jesus withdraw from Galilee because he was afraid?
11. What might have happened if he had stayed there?
12. How long a journey might this have been?

XXI. Deciding the Problem.

MATTHEW XVI. 13-20; MARK VIII. 27-32; LUKE IX. 18-21.

We must imagine Jesus during these days, pondering over his great problem. Whatever he happened to be doing, that great question continually beset him, Am I the Christ whom God has sent, or am I only his forerunner? We can well imagine how the question tortured him. It was a most important question to him, and a great deal depended on how he decided it.

In the first place it meant, possibly, life or death to him. For, if he should declare himself the Christ, he knew the Pharisees, who expected their Christ to come with regal pomp, would ridicule him, call him "blasphemer," and perhaps put him to death. In the second place, the welfare of his friends depended on his decision. They were loyal, and would follow him, whatever he did. If he decided rightly, their well-being would be secured. If he decided wrongly, he would lead them into unmerited errors and disasters. He felt that their fortunes were in his hands, and this feeling made the problem ten times more serious.

Now all these arguments had been weighed by Jesus for some months, and he had at last pretty nearly come to the conclusion that he was the long-expected Messiah. Everything seemed to prove it. It looked as though that were his especial task. He had not yet told the disciples of his decision, but he took the very next opportunity of doing so. When they got to the country around Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus took his disciples aside to a quiet, shady place, and said, I have something to talk about. Who do men say I am?

Everybody was perfectly still for a moment, they were so astonished at the question. Then they began to answer bashfully: Some say you are John the Baptist come to life again. Some say you are Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the Old Testament prophets. Jesus, with a quiet little smile, asked them, But who do you say that I am? Again there came a startled

pause, which no one dared to break. But all at once Peter, the impulsive one, sprang to his feet, and cried out in a ringing voice, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God!

Jesus turned to him, and blessed him for his honesty and sympathetic insight, and from that moment the great problem of his life was decided. He was no longer Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet and preacher of strange tidings: he was thenceforth, in his own honest belief, Jesus Christ, the Messiah of God, with a Messiah's work to do.

1. Where was Cæsarea Philippi?
2. What startling question did Jesus ask his disciples?
3. To whom does he refer by the name Son of Man?
4. How did they answer the question?
5. How did he ask the question a second time?
6. Which one of the disciples answered him?
7. How do you think he acted when he gave this answer?
8. How did Jesus receive the answer?
9. What may we infer from the words "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee"?
10. What prophecy as to his own fate did Jesus at once make?
11. How could Jesus foresee this fate?
12. Why did Jesus rebuke Peter so sharply?

XXII. A Rift of Light.

MATTHEW XVII. 1-8, 14-21; MARK IX. 2-8; LUKE IX. 28-36.

As soon as Jesus had decided that he must be the Christ, there came a great change into his life. Heretofore he had been only a forerunner of the Christ, whose work had consisted in preaching to the people and preparing them for the Messiah's coming. But now that he himself was the Christ, he must add to all this work and teaching the task of actually establishing his kingdom.

There was still another change that came over him when he decided his problem. Before that day in Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus had been a happy, earnest teacher. But now that he was the Christ, the nation's deliverer, he became sober and thoughtful, as though awed by the vast responsibilities of his office. Moreover, he knew very well that he would be in danger of death at the hands of the Pharisees and Rabbis in Jerusalem, because he dared to claim that he was the Messiah of God. His mind was full of dread for the sufferings he would have to endure.

If it seems strange to us that he should have dared to take this great office in view of its dangers, we must remember that in his heart there was something stronger than fear,—his stern sense of obedience to duty. This sense of obedience, of fidelity to conscience, compelled him to make that dangerous choice, even though he knew its dangers. And we must suppose that beneath all his fears there lived a deep and radiant serenity which not even the prospect of death could destroy, but which came to him as the natural flower of his obedience to God.

One time, a few days after the decision was made, this serenity came to the surface. It was upon a hilltop, whither he had gone with three of his friends. As he sat there, thinking over his actions and his future, he might have communed thus with himself: I have decided that I am the Christ. I have taken that office because it is my plain duty. The Pharisees will

probably kill me for calling myself Christ, but they cannot rob me of my joy in doing what I know I ought to do. I have obeyed God in the face of death, and my reward lies in this gratified conscience. And then this feeling of serene satisfaction took such hold upon him that, as the story says, he was transfigured with happiness. His face shone as the sun, and God's own voice spoke to him,—This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

We have a proverb which says that "duty performed is a rainbow in the soul." It was some such rainbow as this that filled the soul of Jesus with a rift of heavenly light. Come what might, his conscience was at rest. With a gratified conscience a man can bear almost any sorrow.

1. Where did Jesus go six days after the scene at Cæsarea Philippi?
2. Which disciples did he take with him?
3. What especial relation did these disciples enjoy towards Jesus?
4. What is it to be transfigured?
5. How did this transfiguration show itself in Jesus?
6. What suggestion did Peter make?
7. What did the wonderful voice say to them?
8. What do you think this transfiguration means?
9. Upon what other occasion did a heavenly voice speak to him?
10. What sad scene did they find at the foot of the mountain?
11. Why could not the disciples cure the demoniac?
12. Did Jesus really mean that they could remove mountains by faith?

XXIII. The First Temptation.

MATTHEW IV. 1-7.

No man can find himself suddenly gifted with a strange new power without at once being tempted to misuse that power. It was so with Jesus. After the memorable scene in Cæsarea Philippi, where he definitely took upon himself the name and the work of God's Messiah, there came to him a realization of the great power which he possessed, and which he could exercise upon the humble people about him.

His influence over them was enormous. He could make them believe just what he wanted them to believe, and he could make them do just what he wanted them to do. He saw clearly that they trusted him entirely, and that whatsoever he said was law to them. It was perfectly natural that he should at once be tempted to abuse this power; and the story of his temptations and of how he resisted them is one of the noblest stories in the Gospels.

We have it told to us in personal characters and concrete forms, as though the spirit's darkness and perplexity in which he struggled were a real wilderness and as though the troublesome voice which whispered tempting words in his heart were the voice of a real evil person. There were three ways in which this voice tempted him to abuse his power. They are called the Three Temptations.

The first temptation was that he should use his wonderful power, not so much for other people's benefit as for his own; that by it he should secure for himself riches and ease and comfort. This temptation Jesus resisted with comparative ease. He was too generous to be really attracted by it. He did not want personal wealth and ease nearly so much as he wanted to help others and have others enjoy a richer and truer and fuller measure of life through his help and through his self-denial.

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1. Where did the Spirit lead Jesus?
 2. What was the purpose of this errand?

3. How long did he fast?
4. What does the numeral 40 signify?
5. What did the tempter suggest that he do to the stones?
6. How did Jesus answer?
7. After what event did this temptation come, according to the Gospels?
8. Was it into a real wilderness that he went?
9. Was it a real Satan who spoke to him?
10. What great power had he just received?
11. For what purpose had this power been given him?
12. Of what sin would he have been guilty if he had used this power for another purpose?

XXIV. The Second Temptation.

LUKE IV. 1-13; MATTHEW XII. 38.

We have seen that it is very natural for a man to be tempted to misuse his power as soon as he is given power. Many a man has been an upright private citizen, but when he has been elected to some political office which gave him a certain amount of power, and has enabled him to influence the lives of others, he has yielded to the temptation to use this new power to his own profit, to make his own private fortune by it, or to secure his own selfish ambition by it. It is a common temptation, and perhaps we know actual people who have fallen into it.

Jesus readily resisted this temptation, but the second temptation that came to him he found much harder to resist. We have seen that his great aim in life was to help his fellow-men. We have seen that he had a great influence over the common people, and could help them wonderfully because they were ready to believe all he said. The great difficulty in his way was that the more important people in the nation, the Scribes and Priests and Pharisees, would not allow his claim of being the Christ and would not believe on him.

If only he could do something that would win them over to his side, his work of establishing a great Jewish kingdom of heaven would become very much easier and simpler. He needed their recognition. So the voice whispered to him to employ his wonderful power in doing something so marvelous that they would at once give him their recognition. Cast yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple, said the voice. You will suffer no hurt, for you are God's Christ. And this will seem so wonderful that everybody will believe on you, and recognize you as the Christ.

This was a hard temptation for Christ to overcome, for it seemed to promise him real help in doing his work. But he saw that it would not do to win recognition in such cheap ways. Good work must be done in good ways, and his recognition with the people, in order to be worth anything to him or to them,

must come through their honest appreciation of his true worth, and not through miracle or sign. So, after a severe conflict, he put down this temptation also.

1. Which is the second temptation in the Matthew story?
2. Which temptation is this in the Luke story?
3. Why did Satan take him to Jerusalem?
4. How many temples were there in the country?
5. How high was the pinnacle of the temple?
6. What did Satan say would happen if Jesus cast himself down?
7. From what Old Testament books does Satan quote in Luke iv. 10 and 11?
8. Did Jesus really believe that he could leap from this pinnacle without injury?
9. What effect would this have upon those who saw him?
10. What is a sign?
11. Why did the Pharisees want him to give them a sign?
12. Why did Jesus resist this temptation?

XXV. The Third Temptation.

MATTHEW IV. 8-11; JOHN VI. 15.

The third temptation was the hardest one of all, because it was a temptation to do nothing selfish or evil, but to do good. The voice said to him: You want to help your people, and teach them to live true and happy lives? Very well. They like you and believe in you. You have a great influence over them. If you will only consent, they are ready and anxious to take you and make you their king. You may rule them from your throne, and they will fight your battles and conquer your enemies, and make you all-powerful.

And then, as king of the people, just think of the vast amount of good you can do them. You can make good laws, and put down all corrupt practices, and remedy all the social evils and injustices, and rule them in equity and righteousness, and there shall be no more sin or cruelty or sorrow or oppression in all the land; and all your subjects will love you and bless your name.

We can easily understand how sorely this temptation appealed to Christ to use his power to make himself king, and then to inaugurate a model kingdom upon earth. But, after a long, bitter fight, he resisted this temptation also, and for this reason: he was not satisfied to do a certain amount of real good to a certain number of people.

He wanted to do all the good he possibly could to as many people as he could possibly reach. If he should allow himself to be made a king, he could do a certain amount of immediate and temporary good to a certain number of people.

But something told him, perhaps, that, if only he would go on his true way, and preach his gospel, and suffer his harsh death, and keep himself absolutely true to the pure voice of conscience in his heart, the whole world would in time learn to honor him and love him, and accept him as the type and example of true living, and that thus his influence for good

would become infinitely greater and more lasting, and would spread over all nations and live through all ages.

1. Where did Satan take him for the last temptation?
2. What did Satan show him from that place?
3. What offer did Satan make him?
4. How did Jesus reply?
5. Could Jesus really have been king if he wanted to be?
6. What good might he have done if he had allowed himself to become a king?
7. How extensive do you think his kingdom would have been?
8. Would there have been anything really sinful in yielding to this temptation?
9. Why do you suppose he resisted?
10. Why was this the hardest temptation of all?
11. How extensive is his influence to-day?
12. What is the reason of this great extent of his influence?

XXVI. Starting for Jerusalem.

MATTHEW XVII. 22-23, XX. 17-19; MARK IX. 30-37.

Just how long these various temptations lasted we are unable to say. They were probably not very definite either in time or place, but they occurred to him at odd times and places probably over and over again. Jesus nobly resisted them all, and resolved to keep himself absolutely true to the calm, insistent voice of conscience which spoke its divine promptings in his heart. *Sometimes perhaps he wavered and mistrusted himself, but in the end his resolution grew stronger and grander.

He would be the Christ, he would do the work of the Christ, he would obey God with all his fidelity, even though it led him into sorrow and death. As the Christ of God, the first thing to do was to go at once to Jerusalem, and proclaim himself the Messiah of God in the nation's capital. If the people believed him and supported him, then there would be established the kingdom of the noble and true, who would live together in peace and righteousness all their days. But if the people did not believe in him, but mocked him and killed him, as he more than half expected them to do, why, he could only suffer as quietly and bravely as possible.

No matter what the people did, he must do his work faithfully and completely. Then, whatever happened, it would not be through any fault of his. So the little company went at once to Galilee, to the home in Capernaum, and after a short stay there, to make some final preparations perhaps, they started out on their journey of seventy-five or eighty miles for the great city of Jerusalem.

What deep emotions must have passed through Jesus' mind as he took his last look at the little town where he had lived, —at the gently swelling hillsides and green pastures where he had rambled and preached and prayed and spent such happy days, at the beautiful blue lake which he hardly expected to see again! How hard it must have been! But he was a ser-

vant of God. He was driven by his conscience. And, hard as it was, it would be infinitely harder for him to be false to his conscience and to turn a deaf ear to the voice of duty. So, bidding a last good-bye to lake and hill and pasture, he resolutely set his back to the little Galilean home, and started for Jerusalem.

1. Why was it necessary for Jesus to go to Jerusalem?
2. What harsh fate did he see awaiting him in that city?
3. How soon after the transfiguration did he start for Jerusalem?
4. Which route did he take?
5. Who were the Gentiles who should crucify him?
6. Why would the priests and scribes deliver him to these Gentiles?
7. Did the disciples understand what he meant when he foretold his death?
8. What dispute had the disciples been having?
9. How did Jesus settle this dispute?
10. How many times had he been to Jerusalem before?
11. Were there many people in Jerusalem who would know him?
12. At what time of the year did he plan to reach the city?

XXVII. The Journey.

MATTHEW XIX. 13-22; MARK X. 13-31; LUKE XVIII. 15-30.

Of course, the journey had to be made all the way on foot. Sometimes people traveled on camels or donkeys, but usually they walked, and Jesus and his friends were all young and vigorous, so that the prospect of the long, easy tramp was very pleasant. They decided to go a rather roundabout way.

The shortest way would be to cut right down south through the country of Samaria, stopping three or four times, for night, at little villages along the way. But this was not a favorite way, for the people of Samaria were very bitter enemies to the Jews, and would not treat them at all well. Then there was the caravan route which they could follow, running down on the west along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. But this was rather too long a way.

Instead they decided to cross the Jordan River to the east bank, and travel down through the country called Perea. This would be a delightful journey, and would give Jesus an opportunity for visiting many towns which he had never seen and for preaching to people who had never heard him. This, then, was the route they took, fording the Jordan at a point just south of the Sea of Galilee.

Many pleasant incidents occurred on the way. The people came to meet him everywhere with the utmost eagerness. He preached to them, and healed their sick, and taught them his gospel of love and goodness. Of course, all this delayed the journey considerably, but there was no especial haste. It was during this trip that Jesus was met one day by a group of women bringing their children for him to talk to and bless. We can imagine him resting under a shady tree by the roadside, while the children played around him or climbed into his arms.

It was also upon this trip that a rich young man came to him, very anxious to know how he could get into heaven, and declaring that he had obeyed all the commandments. And,

when Jesus told him to go and sell all his possessions and give the money to the poor, he shook his head and turned sadly away. He did not want to belong to the kingdom of heaven quite enough to do all that. So the time went by. Each day he preached to some new hearers or told his disciples some new parable; and each day brought him nearer and nearer to the city of Jerusalem.

1. What band of little visitors came to see him one day?
2. How were they received by the disciples?
3. Why did the disciples treat them so?
4. How did Jesus receive them?
5. Do you think Jesus was fond of little children?
6. What question did the young man ask him?
7. To what famous passage did Jesus refer him?
8. What did Jesus finally tell him to do?
9. Why did he refuse to do this?
10. Is it possible for a camel to pass through a needle's eye?
11. Do you think Jesus was prejudiced against rich people?
12. What did he consider the true use of riches?

XXVIII. Dark Forebodings.

MATTHEW XX. 17-19; LUKE XVIII. 31-34.

As they gradually drew nearer the city, Jesus could not help thinking more and more of the harsh treatment, perhaps death even, that was in store for him. We must understand that the Jews were a very pious people. They took their religion very seriously, and considered it a great sin for any one to say anything against God or the Messiah or the Bible. Such sins were called "blasphemy," and were considered crimes worthy of death.

They thought it about as sinful for a common man to claim that he was the Messiah as for him to claim that he was God himself. Such a man would be looked upon as a base impostor. He would be guilty of the worst blasphemy, because he set himself up to be the holy Messiah, the messenger of God Most High. Now Jesus honestly believed himself to be that Messiah, but he knew he could not make the proud Pharisees and Rabbis believe it. Hence he foresaw how that they would call him a liar, and a fraud and a blasphemor, and would want to kill him.

In olden days the Jews executed their criminals by stoning them to death outside the city wall. But now the country was under the laws of Rome, and the Roman law said that a criminal must be executed by crucifixion, which was, if anything, even more horrible than stoning. So this is what Jesus feared. He knew the powerful, influential men in Jerusalem would not believe him when he said he was the Messiah. He knew they would charge him with blasphemy, and have a trial, and then take him to the Roman governor and demand that he be executed. And there was no reason why the governor should not give the order to his soldiers to take him outside the city and crucify him. This is what he expected. These were his dark forebodings, and they kept growing darker, the nearer he approached the city.

Sometimes the craving for sympathy and help came over

him so strongly that he felt he must talk to some one about his fears and misgivings. So he would try to tell his disciples. But they could never understand, and simply said, Oh, no, that will never happen. Thus he had to bear his anxiety all alone. What a wonder it is that he did not give it all up, and go back to his quiet, obscure, safe life in Galilee! What a noble will he must have had to keep so steadily on in his God-given duty, even in the face of a fearful death!

1. What dark prophecy did Jesus make to his disciples concerning his own fate?
2. Did they share these gloomy expectations?
3. What do you think were their own expectations as to their master's fortune?
4. Why was Jesus prompted to make these prophecies to them?
5. Why did he wish to prepare them for his fate?
6. What are some of the things that were written through the prophets, to which he refers in the Luke version?
7. What is sympathy?
8. Do you think the disciples were sympathetic to Jesus?
9. What was it that prevented their understanding his prophecies?
10. Do you think Jesus was happy during these days?
11. Why did he go straight ahead?
12. What traits of character are most prominent in Jesus just now?

XXIX. Jericho.

MATTHEW XX. 29-34; MARK X. 46-52; LUKE XVIII. 35-43, XIX. 1-10.

Traveling along in this easy fashion, Jesus and his company finally reached the city of Jericho, very near Jerusalem. This, you remember, was the first city that Joshua and his Israelitish army conquered when they entered Canaan hundreds of years before. Ever since that time it had been inhabited by the Jews, and had ranked as one of their largest and most important cities.

As Jesus entered the gates and passed through the streets, two little incidents happened which offered him precious encouragement. A poor blind man named Bartimæus was seated at the roadside, begging alms. He heard the soft footfalls of sandals in the dust, and cried out to know who was passing by. Some one said, Jesus of Nazareth. At once the poor fellow shouted out, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!

They told him roughly to keep still, but he shouted the louder, Jesus, have mercy on me, until Jesus heard and stopped, and asked him what he would have. Bartimæus made his touching request, Lord, I ask that I may receive my sight. Jesus granted his request in heartfelt gratitude. Here was a blind beggar who believed on him and came to him for help, and Jesus secretly thanked him for even his poor trust and confidence.

As he walked along, with the people crowding around him more and more, he happened to glance up into a fig-tree that grew at the side of the street, and saw the figure of a man perched among the branches, and looking eagerly and intently down at him. It was a man named Zacchæus, who, being very short, had found it impossible to get a glimpse of Jesus through the crowd, and so had run on ahead and climbed a tree in order to get a good look at him. He was a man whom everybody hated and despised, because he was a tax-gatherer; but Jesus was so touched by his eagerness to see him that he

struck up a friendship with him, and called him to his side, and spent that night at his house.

Here was another man, a despised and misjudged publican, who yet believed on Jesus, and was proud of it. What an encouragement it was to him to win the confidence of at least a blind beggar and a hated tax-gatherer, if of no one else! Jesus went about his work strengthened in his determination to be faithful for the sake of the poor and the outcast, like Bartimæus and Zacchæus, if not for the benefit of the strong and the well-to-do.

1. What great city did he visit on the way to Jerusalem?
2. What occupation did Zacchæus follow?
3. Why could not Zacchæus see Jesus?
4. How did he manage to get a glimpse of him?
5. Why did the people murmur when Jesus proposed to stay at Zacchæus' house?
6. What does Bartimæus mean?
7. What was the matter with Bartimæus?
8. How did he know that Jesus was going by?
9. How did he reply when they told him to keep still?
10. Did Jesus resent being interrupted by a blind beggar?
11. Of what Old Testament incident does this remind you?
12. How far was Jerusalem from Jericho?

XXX. A Cry of Discouragement.

MATTHEW XXIII. 37-39; LUKE XIX. 41-44.

It is not likely that they stayed long in Jericho. They were in a hurry to get to Jerusalem, all the more so as it was getting near the time for the great annual Passover Feast, which the Jews observed with impressive religious ceremonies and many family gatherings. So probably the next day they set out from Jericho, up the steep, wild glen road, where there was great danger of being attacked by robbers and even savage beasts, towards the capital city.

They stopped over night in Bethany, at the house of Mary and Martha, and then the following morning quite a little company, including Jesus and his disciples and perhaps twenty or thirty friends who attached themselves to him, started out to walk the remaining five or six miles, and enter the city. Their road wound easily over a low mountain range, up gradually to the summit and down on the other side, into the little valley in the center of which stood Jerusalem.

We can well imagine how nervous Jesus grew as they trudged along this road and kept getting nearer to the top of the mountain. His heart began to beat painfully, for he felt that the most important moment of his life was coming. Here they were at last almost within sight of Jerusalem, where he must proclaim himself the Jewish Messiah, and must invite all who believed him to join with him in starting a kingdom of righteousness, and where in all probability he would be arrested by the powerful men, and tried for blasphemy, and mocked, and killed.

All these thoughts went through his mind as he toiled up the hill. And, when at last they reached the summit of the hill and could look down on the other side, there lay the great, compact city before them, with its gray wall and its red-tiled roofs, with its domes and towers and gorgeous temple glistening with marble and gold in the sun. It was such a beautiful sight, and it came so suddenly, that Jesus was completely

overcome. He seemed to feel all at once the utter hopelessness of his work. Could he ever win this great proud city to his humble gospel? Was he not foredoomed to failure? Yet he must carry out his efforts.

The sight gave him a bitter foretaste of disappointment, and it was so hard to bear that, as he gazed at the great city lying there in the sun, so proud and self-satisfied, he could not restrain the tears, because he knew how obstinate it was going to be, how it was going to turn away from his message, which would have secured it strength and security and peace. It is no wonder that he wept at the sight and thought. The wonder is that in spite of the discouragement he kept on.

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1. What village did Jesus stop at on his way to Jerusalem?
 2. What people did he know in this village?
 3. What natural feature of the landscape lay between this village and Jerusalem?
 4. At what point in the road might the traveler get his first view of the city?
 5. How did this first sight affect Jesus?
 6. Of what other incident in his life might he have been thinking?
 7. Was his prophecy ever fulfilled?
 8. Could Jesus have really averted the ruin of the city?
 9. As he wept over the city, was he thinking of himself or of them?
 10. How many people were with Jesus?
 11. What great event was about to begin in the city?
 12. Why did he come to Jerusalem at just this time?

XXXI. Fulfilling the Prophecy.

MATTHEW XXI. 1-11; MARK XI. 1-10; LUKE XIX. 29-40.

In the Old Testament book of Zechariah there is a prophecy which declares that, when the Messiah should come into Jerusalem, people might know him because he would be a lowly, humble man, and would be riding upon a little ass's colt. It was not a very definite prophecy, because there were a great many lowly, humble men who continually rode into Jerusalem upon asses or upon colts. That was one of the commonest methods of traveling at the time. So people did not pay much attention to the prophecy. Besides, they did not expect a lowly, humble Messiah: they looked for a glorious, powerful king.

But Jesus was very familiar with this Old Testament prophecy, as he was with all the sacred writings, and was determined, when he entered Jerusalem, to do it in the way the prophecy described, riding upon a little colt. It would perhaps be a tacit way of proclaiming himself the man of whom the prophecy was written. So, when they started on for the city, he sent two disciples ahead to the village of Bethphage, half-way down the mountain, with instructions to find a colt there and have him ready.

Sure enough, when he and the rest of his friends came to Bethphage, there were the two disciples holding a sturdy little colt, upon which they had laid their mantles to make a sort of saddle. Jesus got upon the strong little beast, and went on his way, while all his friends walked eagerly along beside him, singing and talking in a very excited manner. They soon met another company of friends, who had heard that Jesus was coming, and had set out from the city to meet him. These new-comers joined the throng, so that it numbered perhaps as many as a hundred men, women, and children, and they all swept joyously along the road, with Jesus riding ahead, into the city.

In order to show their joy at his coming and in order to

let every one know that this humble man was their Messiah, they cut down palm branches and strewed them, with flowers and leaves and even their own garments, upon the dusty road, so that his colt might walk upon them. And they themselves waved their palms, and shouted, "Hosanna! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" And the children sang and danced about him, and in this simple, joyous fashion Jesus fulfilled the prophecy, and entered the great city of his fathers as the Messiah, sent to deliver his people from sin.

1. Where is the village of Bethphage?
2. On what errand did Jesus send two disciples into this village?
3. How were they to answer, if anybody objected?
4. How did they prepare these animals for him to ride upon?
5. How did they show their joy?
6. What does Hosanna mean?
7. From what Old Testament prophecy did Jesus model this action?
8. What inference did he wish people to draw from this action?
9. Did he create much of a sensation?
10. What did the Pharisees say to him?
11. How did Jesus reply?
12. What name is given to the Sunday which commemorates this event?

XXXII. A Busy Week.

MATTHEW XXI. 12-17, 23-32; MARK XI. 11, 15-19; LUKE XIX. 45-48.

Jerusalem was so crowded that Jesus and his friends could find no place to lodge. So he decided to live in Bethany, and come to the city every morning to do his work. After his triumphal entry he went straight to the beautiful temple on Mt. Zion. This was the place where men worshiped God, and Jesus, as the Messiah of God, felt that he had charge of His temple and religion. So he went there at once, as to his headquarters.

When he reached it, he saw a sight that filled him with anger. The temple was surrounded by broad marble porticoes or courts. People were continually passing through these courts to make a short cut, or were resting and sleeping in the cool shade; and some were even selling doves and incense and other small wares among the columns. They had no more idea of the sacredness of the place than to turn it into a lounging place and a general bazaar.

It made Jesus just as indignant at it would make us to see a man selling lemonade from the steps of our church. He got a scourge of small knotted cords, and with flashing eyes drove these loungers and venders out of the courts, reminding them that the house of God was a house of prayer, not a den of thieves and robbers. This action of his excited the hostility of the Priests and Rabbis, who resented such an implication of proprietorship and authority from a humble peasant. They asked him "by what authority" he did these things, and they set themselves to work in the craftiest ways to entrap Jesus into saying something blasphemous or treasonous, so that they might ruin him.

They knew that, if they could catch him saying anything disparaging to their religion or their law, the people would turn from him as from a leper; and, if only they might catch him saying something against Rome, it would be a simple matter to have him arrested by the Roman officers for treason.

So hardly a day went by but what some group of cunning old Jews approached him with bland words and fair exterior, to put their embarrassing questions to him.

In the incident of the tribute money, and the woman taken in sin, and in the question regarding the great commandment, and concerning marriage in heaven, we have a few samples of the wiles and plots by means of which they attempted to ensnare Jesus. Jesus, on the other hand, foils every plot and parries every thrust with such quick insight and ready tact that we listen to his retorts in wonder and delight. In this way a busy week went by. His days were spent in the city, in the temple, on the streets, preaching and talking to the people who heard him gladly. His nights were spent peacefully with his loving friends in Bethany.

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1. Where did Jesus go first after entering Jerusalem?
 2. What did he see there that made him very angry?
 3. Why did these people gather in just that place?
 4. What did Jesus do to them?
 5. How did the Pharisees feel when they saw this action?
 6. What embarrassing question did the Pharisees ask him?
 7. Suppose Jesus had answered their question, what charge would they have brought against him?
 8. What embarrassing question did he ask them in turn?
 9. Why did they not dare to answer this question?
 10. Why were the Pharisees so anxious to destroy him?
 11. To whom did the two sons in the parable correspond?
 12. Where did Jesus spend his nights?

XXXIII. The Last Meal Together.

MATTHEW XXVI. 1-5, 14-30; MARK XIV. 1-2, 10-26; LUKE XXII. 1-23.

As the days went by, Jesus could not help seeing that the feeling of the Scribes and Pharisees was growing more and more hostile towards him. The tone of sarcasm and mockery with which they had at first met him had grown into deep and genuine hatred. Rumors came to his ears of plans and conspiracies to entrap him, and in a dozen different ways he was led to see that the end was near, and that the bitter feeling of his enemies must soon break out into violent action. This he had more than half expected all along, but the present reality was none the less terrifying in spite of his being forewarned.

As the great Passover Week drew to its close, something seemed to tell Jesus that he had not much longer to live. On Thursday night it was the custom for all good Jews to eat their annual Passover Supper. Jesus felt that this supper would be the last meal he and his disciples would ever eat together. Events proved that his feeling was only too true. He decided to make it a sort of a farewell occasion to his friends. This Passover Supper, which came on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, was the central feature of the whole celebration, and was not so unlike our Thanksgiving dinner.

On that evening the people all gathered by families or by parties of eight or ten, each in a separate room, and there they ate this sacred meal. They always had bitter herbs and unleavened bread and a lamb, just as we always have turkey and cranberry sauce for Thanksgiving. The custom was that they must eat everything up. Jesus and his friends had their supper together in an upper chamber which some one lent them. It was a solemn company, for Jesus felt that it was the last he should see of them. He knew that his enemies were only waiting for an excuse to arrest him, so as to convict him of blasphemy and condemn him to death. He also knew

from certain suspicious actions that one of his own disciples, Judas, was planning to help the Pharisees to arrest him.

We cannot believe Judas was treacherous in his design. He was rather working from the notion that by placing his master in mortal peril he should force him to call upon divine aid, and thus prove conclusively, in the eyes of the whole nation, that he was the divine Messiah. Jesus must have suspected his purpose, for, while they were sitting at the table, he said, with a suddenness that was startling, "One of you shall betray me."

The words cast a gloom on the company. They realized for the first time that Jesus was in desperate danger, and that this very meal might be their last farewell to him. The supper ended in sadness. They sang a hymn together, and then went out into the cool night, to the Garden of Gethsemane.

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1. Why were the Pharisees unwilling to take Jesus during the feast?
 2. Which one of the twelve disciples proposed to betray him to them?
 3. How did Jesus tell his disciples to find the chamber where they might eat their Passover Feast?
 4. What did they have to do to make ready the Passover?
 5. What did they have to eat at this meal?
 6. On what day of the week was it eaten?
 7. At what time of day?
 8. What startling thing did Jesus tell them as they were eating?
 9. How did they answer?
 10. How did he say good-bye to them?
 11. In what way does the Christian Church commemorate this meal?
 12. Where did they go after the meal was finished?

XXXIV. The Darkest Hour.

MATTHEW XXVI. 36-56; MARK XIV. 32-50.

As Jesus and his disciples left the room where they had eaten their Passover Supper, Judas was missing. He had gone to meet the officers of the High Priest and lead them to Jesus. It became at once evident to Jesus that the time had come for him to face his enemies, and to suffer at their hands whatever torment they might see fit to inflict.

It was very natural that this prospect should arouse in him a perfect agony of dread. Even the coolest and most valiant heart must tremble a little in the presence of an awful death. Jesus was a peaceful man. He did not have the hardened nerves of a soldier. He had lived a gentle, quiet life, and the thought of being arrested and brutally handled and killed filled him almost with panic.

All his strong love of life and peace and comfort came to the surface, and urged him to escape while yet there was time. There might still be an hour or so before Judas reached the garden with the officers. Why should he not quietly slip off to Bethany or disappear among the wild ravines of the wilderness? He could wait there until the trouble blew over. People would soon forget, and then he would be safe again. Life was just as sweet to him as it is to us, and his fear of physical pain was just as keen as ours. So this instinct to save himself came uppermost.

But there was another instinct in his noble mind that was just as strong, and even stronger. It was the instinct of fidelity to his ideal, of obedience to his sense of duty. God wanted him to be his Christ. If God chose to have his Christ suffer and die, it was his duty to suffer and die. It was a hard battle that was fought there in the darkness of Gethsemane, the eternal battle between selfish inclination and the sense of duty.

We do not think any the less of Jesus for passing through the terror and weakness of that last dark hour. It just shows how much it cost him to keep himself true to God's will. If

the struggle had been easier, the victory would not have been so glorious. As he kneels there beside a huge stone in the garden, praying to God, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt," he shows us how noble and true in spite of all human weaknesses a man can be.

So he overcame his last weakness and hushed his last fear, and gave himself once more, and for the last time, completely over to the service of God. The next moment, when Judas appeared with a band of soldiers and pointed out Jesus by kissing him, he went quietly with them, in perfect calmness and serenity.

1. Who were the two sons of Zebedee?
2. Why did he begin to be exceeding sorrowful?
3. What prayer did he make to his Heavenly Father in the garden?
4. What were the disciples doing when he came back to them?
5. Of whom was he speaking when he said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"?
6. How many times did he go into the garden to pray?
7. Who did Judas bring with him to arrest Christ?
8. How did Judas identify Christ?
9. Which one of the disciples began to offer resistance?
10. What did the disciples do when he was arrested?
11. What did Jesus mean when he prayed, "Let this cup pass from me"?
12. What day of the week was this?

XXXV. The End.

MATTHEW XXVI. 57-68, XXVII. 1-2, 11-61.

Jesus was arrested at about ten o'clock, perhaps, on a Thursday night. The disciples all fled as soon as the soldiers appeared, fearing lest they also be arrested with him. He was taken at once to the house of the High Priest, Caiaphas, and was put up for trial. By his own admission he was convicted of calling himself the Messiah, and was found guilty of blasphemy. The next thing was to get him condemned to death, and, to do this, it was necessary to apply to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

Very early in the morning Jesus was taken, having first been scourged and mocked in the house of Caiaphas, through the narrow streets to the fortress where the governor lived. Pilate was not at all a bad man. He had a keen sense of justice, and he was entirely unprejudiced. When he cross-examined Jesus, he found no fault whatever in him except that he claimed to be the Messiah of the Jews. This did not strike Pilate as being such a great offense; the man might have been a mild lunatic at the most, but hardly deserving of death.

So Pilate, thinking to release him, went out on the portico that looked down into the street, and spoke to the crowd. He said, I find no guilt in this man. I see no cause for killing him. I will give orders that he be whipped, and then I will release him. But the people shouted angrily back: Crucify him! Crucify him! Still Pilate stuck to his intention. He had Jesus whipped, and a crown of thorny brambles forced upon his head, and in that pitiable condition Pilate led him out on the portico, and showed him to the people, and said: See, here is the man. I have had him scourged and crowned with thorns. Is not that punishment enough? See how he has suffered! Will you not let me release him now? But the people shouted still more furiously: Crucify him! Crucify him!

And some of the influential men warned Pilate that, if he

did not crucify him, it would stir up a sedition, and the Roman emperor might think him incapable of handling the province. So at last, to save his own position, Pilate washed his hands of the whole affair, and said: Oh, very well, do as you please with him. His blood is not on my hands. The soldiers made a great rough cross from beams of wood, and the whole crowd poured out of the city to the place of execution, called Golgotha.

There they nailed their victim upon the cross, and fixed it upright by planting the end in the ground. There Jesus hung for a time, until his weak and outworn body could endure the pain no longer. Then with a despairing cry to God, who appeared to have utterly forgotten him, he died. Loving friends came and took the shattered body down, and laid it tenderly in a grave. No man can tell where that grave is.

1. Where was Jesus first taken?
2. Which of the disciples stealthily followed Jesus?
3. What accusation did they find against Jesus?
4. Where did they take him the first thing in the morning?
5. Why was this necessary?
6. In what ways did Pilate endeavor to save his life?
7. Why did Pilate finally consent to his death?
8. In what cruel way did they mock him?
9. Who did they get to help him carry out his cross?
10. How long did Jesus live?
11. What were his last words?
12. Who buried him, and why was he buried so quickly?

XXXVI. Conclusion.

With the last tragic scene the story of Jesus' life comes to a triumphant and heroic close. If we could go on with the story of the disciples and the early Christian Church, we would see how great was the influence of Jesus' life upon men. As we look back through the lessons we have studied, there stands out prominently and clearly a life faithful to the duty it felt laid upon itself.

Jesus' duty was a very high and beautiful one. It was his strength, as he himself testified: My meat is to do the will of God. He felt that God had sent him to do and to say certain things, and, whatever else might happen to him, he must do and say those things. It was not always, as we have seen, the easiest and safest way for him personally, but it was the only way his strong and steadfast soul could take, because it was the duty which the will of his Father had laid upon him.

This duty was not like a hard task that he did because he was forced to do it, but was done willingly and gladly, because he loved and wanted to help his people. And so, when his duty grew into the thought that he was the Messiah, he undertook that work as the will of God, and in love and helpfulness to men, though it was full of dangers for him. This faithful and loving obedience to duty is what our lessons have principally taught us.

We may ask, Was Jesus the Messiah? If we think of the Messiah as the Jews did, as a prince and warrior who was to conquer their enemies and rule gloriously, then Jesus was not the Messiah. Because he did none of these things, because he did not try to do so or teach so, the Jews would not accept him. So Jesus was not the Messiah according to Jewish belief. He had a different idea of the Messiah. He believed in the Messiah of righteousness, who came to set up the kingdom of righteousness in the lives of men. So, as the Messiah, he tried to make his people see that the kingdom of God was

to be established by their being good, just, merciful, pure, and true.

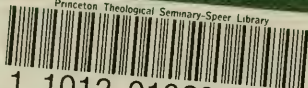
Though he was unsuccessful in leading them to take his view, nevertheless, since his death, men have seen that the kingdom of God can be brought into the world only in that way, and are trying all the time to do so. If we take Jesus' view of the Messiah, as one who in God's good time was sent by Him to show what His kingdom is, and to lead men to it, then we may call Jesus the Messiah.

We have now come to the end of our lessons, and have seen how noble, brave, and unselfish a man can be. And we have in our hearts, always, the companionship of this strong, faithful Jesus of Nazareth to help us, and teach us how to become so.

1. What do you consider the most prominent trait in Christ's character?
2. Do you think he was on the whole a happy man, or was he, as he has been called, a "man of sorrows"?
3. What new thing did he teach the world about God?
4. Of what tender bond with God was he supremely conscious?
5. Does he anywhere claim that he is the only man who enjoys this bond with God?
6. In what relationship with each other does he teach men to live?
7. Do you think he was right in claiming that he was the Christ of God?
8. Have the Jews ever agreed that his claim was a correct one?
9. How old might he have been when he died?
10. What beautiful legend arose concerning him after his crucifixion?
11. In what way does this legend represent the truth?
12. What Sunday in the year commemorates this event?



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